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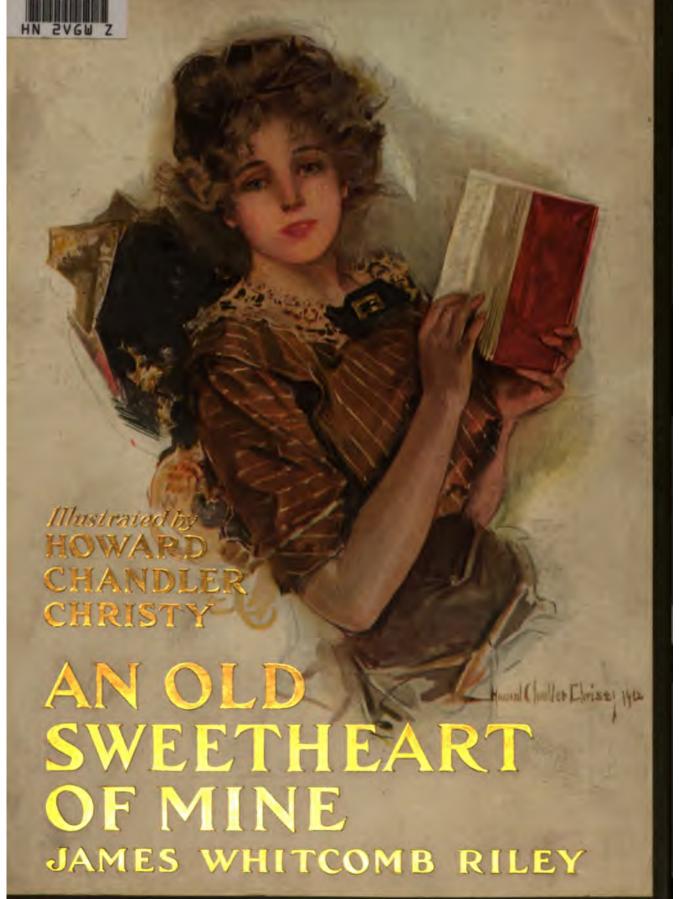
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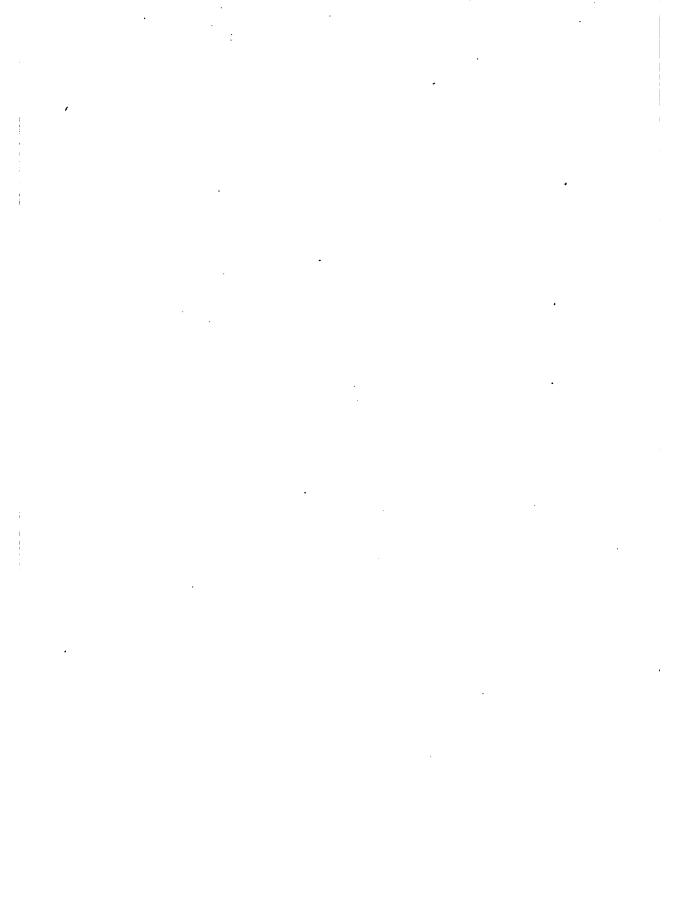
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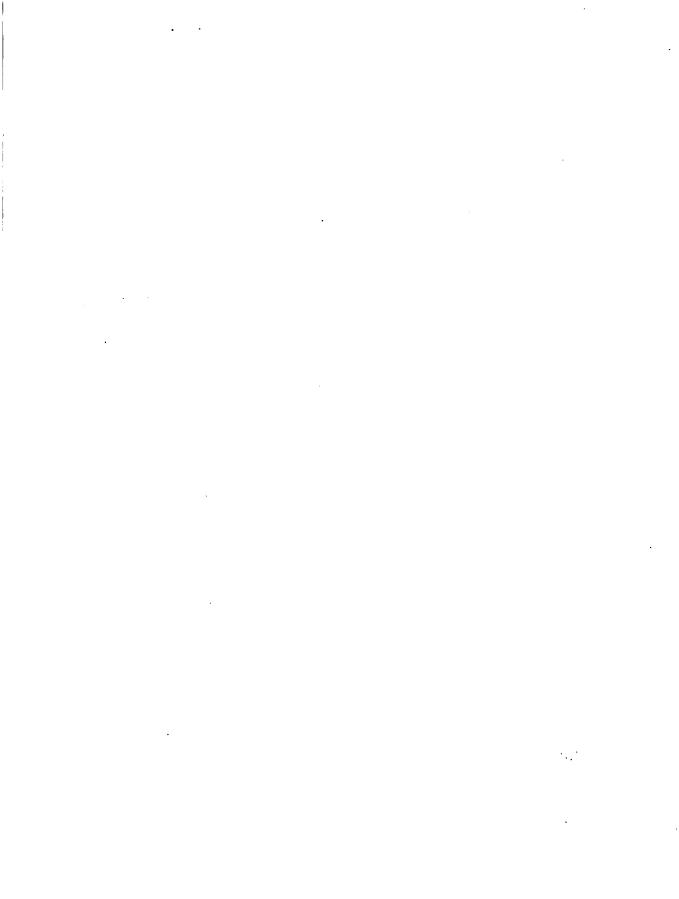
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An Old Sweetheart of Mine

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An Old Sweetheart of Mine

James Whitcomb Riley

Drawings by
Howard Chandler Christy

Decorations by Virginia Keep

The Bobbs-Merrill Company Publishers Indianapolis KF 7473



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An Old Sweetheart of Mine

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The beginning of whose smallest fremash t was marked by the first publication of these verses which howe, expanded by whiten, honored by published and masterial t graned by arost, seem to be a womined symbol of the author's grateful and affect thate regard for the eathor's grateful and affect thate regard for the eathor's praceful.

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- XVII Where the vines were ever fruited, and the weather ever fine
- XVIII And she my faithful sweetheart till the golden hair was gray
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The ordered intermingling

of the real and the dream,—

The mill above the river,

and the mist above the stream;

The life of ceaseless labor,

brave with song and cheery call—

The radiant skies of evening,

with its rainbow o'er us all.

An Old Sweetheart of Mine!—Is this her presence here with me,
Or but a vain creation of a lover's memory?

A fair, illusive vision
that would vanish into air
Dared I even touch the silence
with the whisper of a prayer?



Amuil Cimiler Christy 1902.

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Nay, let me then believe in all the blended false and true—

The semblance of the old love and the substance of the new,—

The then of changeless sunny days—
the now of shower and shine—
But Love forever smiling,—
as that old sweetheart of mine.



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This ever-restful sense of home, though shouts ring in the hall.— The easy-chair—the old bookshelves and prints along the wall; The rare *Habanas* in their box, or gaunt churchwarden-stem That often wags, above the jar, derisively at them.



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As one who cons at evening o'er an album, all alone,
And muses on the faces
of the friends that he has known,

So I turn the leaves of Fancy, till, in shadowy design, I find the smiling features of an old sweetheart of mine.



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The lamplight seems to glimmer with a flicker of surprise,
As I turn it low—to rest me of the dazzle in my eyes,

And light my pipe in silence, save a sigh that seems to yoke Its fate with my tobacco and to vanish with the smoke.



__port Charles Chiefpy =

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'Tis a fragrant retrospection,—
for the loving thoughts that start
Into being are like perfume
from the blossom of the heart;

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Though I hear beneath my study, like a fluttering of wings,

The voices of my children and the mother as she sings—

I feel no twinge of conscience
to deny me any theme
When Care has cast her anchor
in the harbor of a dream—



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The lamplight seems to glimmer with a flicker of surprise,

As I turn it low—to rest me of the dazzle in my eyes,





_well thinks Office .-

For I find an extra flavor in Memory's mellow wine That makes me drink the deeper to that old sweetheart of mine.



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O Childhood-days enchanted!
O the magic of the Spring!—
With all green boughs to blossom white,
and all bluebirds to sing!

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Though I hear beneath my study, like a fluttering of wings,

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I feel no twinge of conscience
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In fact, to speak in earnest,

I believe it adds a charm

To spice the good a trifle

with a little dust of harm,—

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part that the district

And I thrill beneath the glances of a pair of azure eyes As glowing as the summer and as tender as the skies.



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I can see the pink sunbonnet and the little, checkered dress She wore when first I kissed her and she answered the caress With the written declaration that,

"As surely as the vine

Grew 'round the stump," she loved me—

that old sweetheart of mine.



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Again I make her presents,
in a really helpless way,—
The big "Rhode Island Greening"—
(I was hungry too, that day!)—

But I follow her from Spelling,
with her hand behind her—so—
And I slip the apple in it—
and the Teacher doesn't know!



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I give my treasures to her—all,—
my pencil—blue-and-red;—
And, if little girls played marbles,
mine should all be bers, instead!—

But she gave me her photograph, and printed "Ever Thine"

Across the back—in blue-and-red—that old sweetheart of mine!

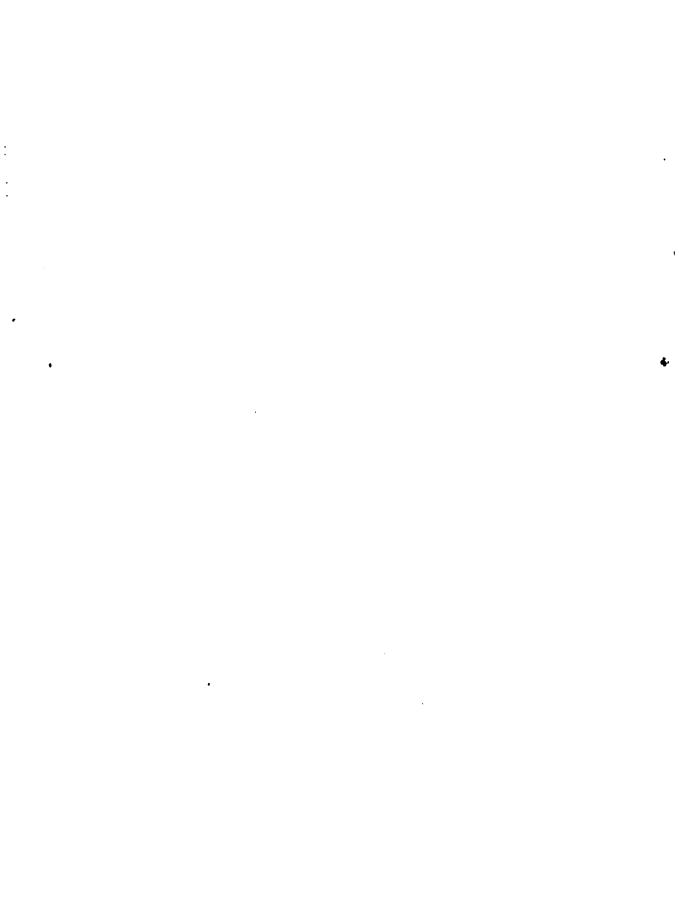


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When I should be a poet, and with nothing else to do But write the tender verses that she set the music to....





When we should live together in a cozy little cot
Hid in a nest of roses,
with a fairy garden-spot,

Where the vines were ever fruited and the weather ever fine,
And the birds were ever singing for that old sweetheart of mine....



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When I should be her lover forever and a day,
And she my faithful sweetheart till the golden hair was gray;

And we should be so happy
that when either's lips were dumb
They would not smile in Heaven
till the other's kiss had come.



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But, ah! my dream is broken by a step upon the stair, And the door is softly opened, and—my wife is standing there: Yet with eagerness and rapture
all my visions I resign,—
To greet the *living* presence
of that old sweetheart of mine



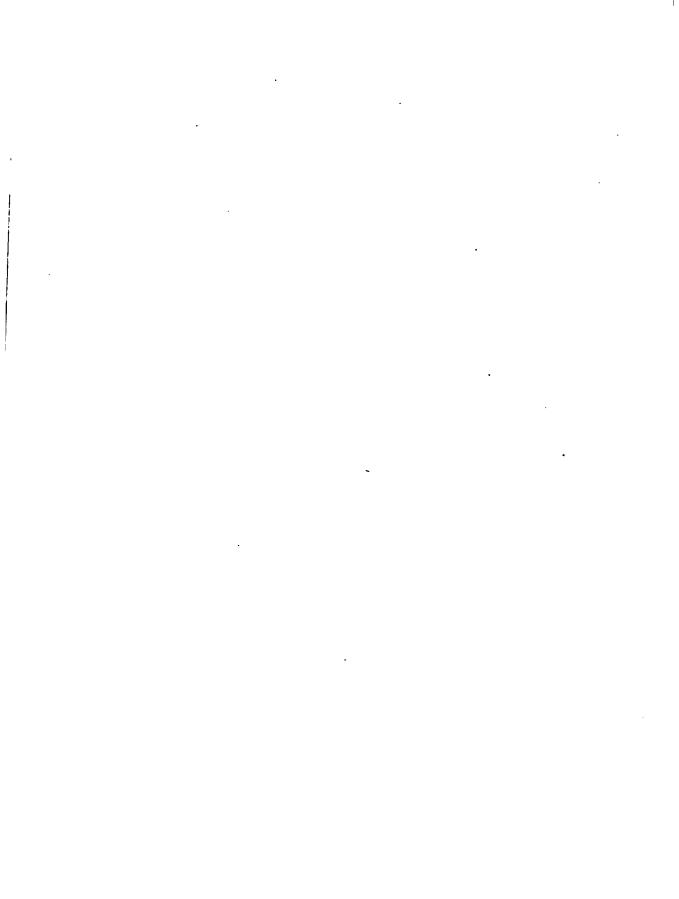
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